United States Department of Agriculture - National Agricultural Statistics Service

WISCONSIN FARM REPORTER

December 18, 2014 - Vol. 14, No. 24

Inside This Issue:

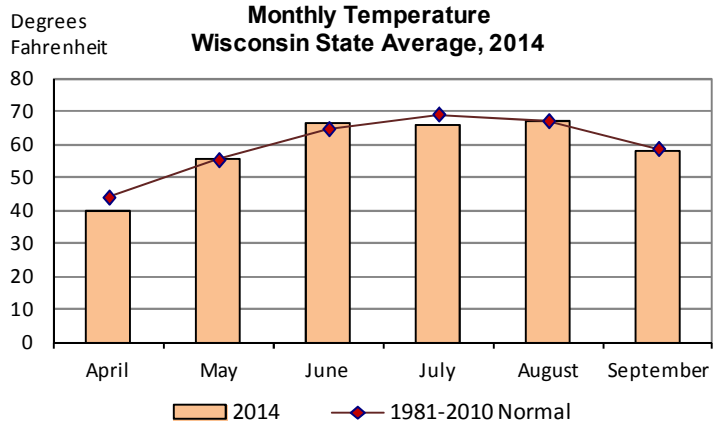
The Crop Progress and Condition Report is made possible by the dedication of our volunteer Crop Progress Reporters. Thanks for your help!

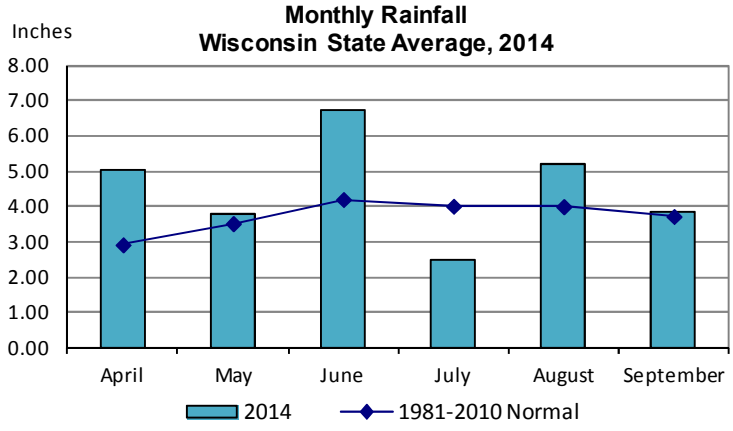
Review of the 2014 Crop Year: Rain, Below Average Temps Kept Progress Slow

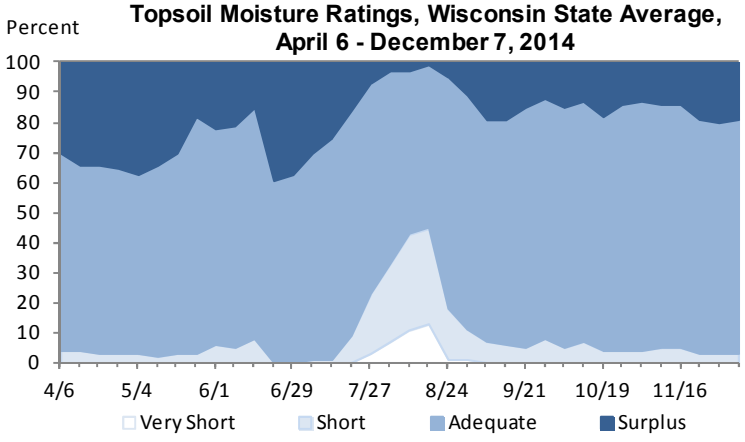
As the 2014 growing season opened, Wisconsin was still feeling the effects of one of the coldest winters on record, with deep and persistent snow cover, greater than normal frost depths, and near-record high ice coverage on lakes and rivers. Additional rain and snow kept spring tillage and planting activities behind normal during April, though progress was persistently ahead of 2013's record late planting season. Waterlogged soils dried out slowly throughout May and early June allowing fieldwork to accelerate. Spring tillage reached 97 percent complete on June 15, only 1 percent behind the 5 year average. Heavy rains during the week of June 22, caused topsoil moistures to peak for the season at 39 percent surplus statewide. Late July and early August saw an extended period of dry, cool weather, which allowed producers to catch up on spraying and midseason fieldwork but slowed crop progress. Frequent rains in late August meant a return of muddy conditions, which persisted throughout autumn. The first frosts were reported the week of September 14, though a widespread frost held off until the week of October 5. The northern part of the state also received a record early snowfall on October 4. Late maturity, high grain moistures, and wet fields caused harvest activities to progress slowly during October, with the waterlogged northeast persistently behind the rest of the state. In mid-November, a major snow storm followed by two weeks of very cold temperatures halted tillage for much of the state. Harvest activities dragged on into mid-December, but snow cover and adverse weather made combining difficult and prevented the harvest of some fields altogether.

Statewide, temperatures from June to September were 0.5 degrees below normal in 2014, compared to 0.4 degrees above normal in 2013. June was the only month this season with above normal temperatures, averaging 1.7 degrees above normal. May and August had normal temperatures, while the remaining months had below normal temperatures. The growing season month with the greatest departure from normal was April, which averaged 4.3 degrees below normal. Temperatures for January through March ranged from 9.0 to 12.3 degrees below normal and November averaged 7.7 degrees below normal.

Precipitation totals for April through September were above normal across the state, with a statewide total of 27.13 inches. This was 3.30 inches above the total for 2013 and 4.70 inches above normal. Total precipitation in the northern third of the state was 6.13 inches above normal for April through September, the central third of the state was 5.11 inches above normal, and the southern third of the state was 1.31 inches above normal. July was the only month of the growing season with below normal precipitation, averaging 1.51 inches below normal. The month with the greatest departure from normal was June, with 2.50 inches above normal.







Cold, wet soils delayed the beginning of **corn** planting, especially in northern Wisconsin. But conditions improved in late May and early June allowing planting and emergence to catch up to average. Corn silking and dough indications trailed the five year average slightly but were ahead of 2013 measures. However, a lack of heat units in the summer months caused corn progress to fall further and further behind. Though corn condition averaged 74 percent good to excellent throughout this season, reporters commented that a portion of the corn crop was not fully mature by October's killing frosts. Immature plants combined with high grain and plant moistures and muddy fields delayed the start of both the silage and corn for grain harvests. Corn silage chopping started in the beginning of September and was 96 percent complete on November 9, about two weeks behind average. The corn for grain harvest also ran about two weeks behind average, with 3 percent harvested on October 5 and 91 percent on December 14. Reporters commented that the early onset of winter weather combined with persistently high grain moistures and low corn prices meant a portion of the year's crop would be left in fields until spring.

Soybeans planting started slow but quickly caught up to the five year average thanks to favorable weather in June. The soybean bloom and pod set in July were slightly above average and well above the previous year. However, the persistently low temperatures of late summer depressed progress. Leaves turning and dropping leaves measures trailed the average at first but caught up as frosts began in early October. Soybeans harvest started a week behind normal, with 2 percent harvested on September 28. High grain moistures kept the harvest below average until the beginning of November, when the lateness of the season forced progress to accelerate. A few fields of soybeans were reportedly snowed under in the early winter storms of November, preventing harvest until spring.

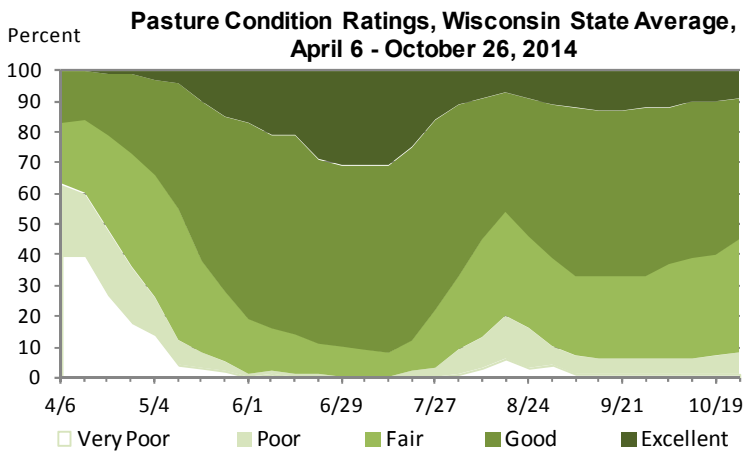
Oats planting got off to a very late start this season thanks to deep snow cover and heavy precipitation in April. Planting started nearly a month behind average and wrapped up in early June, in line with the previous year. Emergence was similarly delayed, but warmer temperatures in June brought the heading stage closer to average. Harvest kicked off with 3 percent harvested on July 13, only 4 percent behind the five year average. However, heavy rains in late August slowed progress dramatically and rendered many unharvested oats fields impassible with mud and standing water. The harvest reached 95 percent complete on September 28, a full month behind average and the latest end to an oats harvest since Crop Progress records began in 1980.

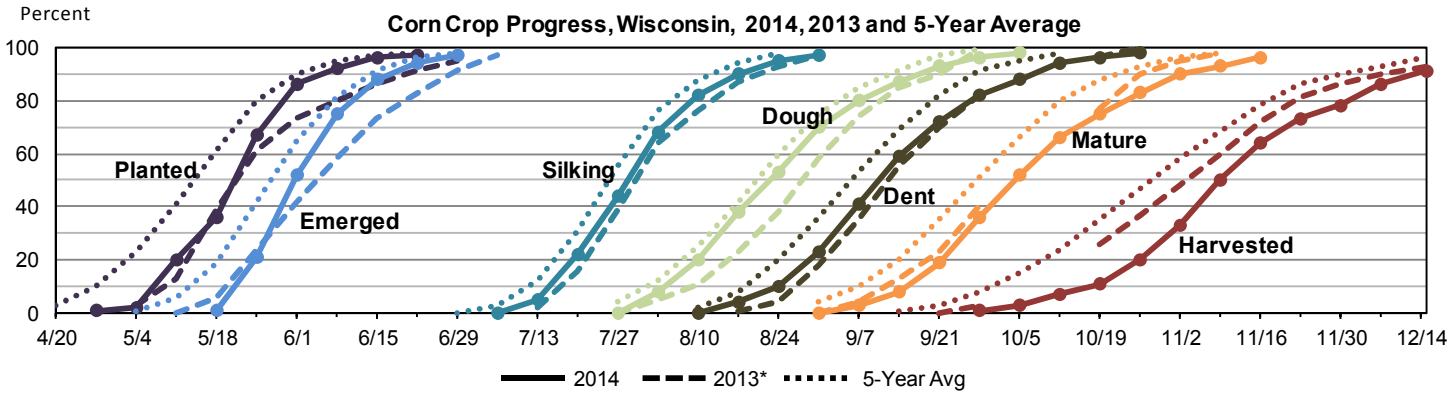
Winter wheat was slow to break dormancy due to cold and snowy conditions in April. Condition increased steadily through the heading and coloring stages, with plenty of available moisture to support growth. Winter wheat harvest began with 2 percent harvested on July 13. Combining moved quickly with the dry conditions of July but stalled at 90 percent complete when heavy rains hit the state in late August. The final ten percent of harvest took a full month due to muddy field conditions. Fall planting began in mid-September and proceeded slowly as fields remained occupied by unharvested soybeans and other crops. Reporters noted that winter wheat planting was prevented in some areas by the inability to get fields cleared before winter weather hit. Emergence reached 93 percent on November 30, with portions of the state already buried in snow.

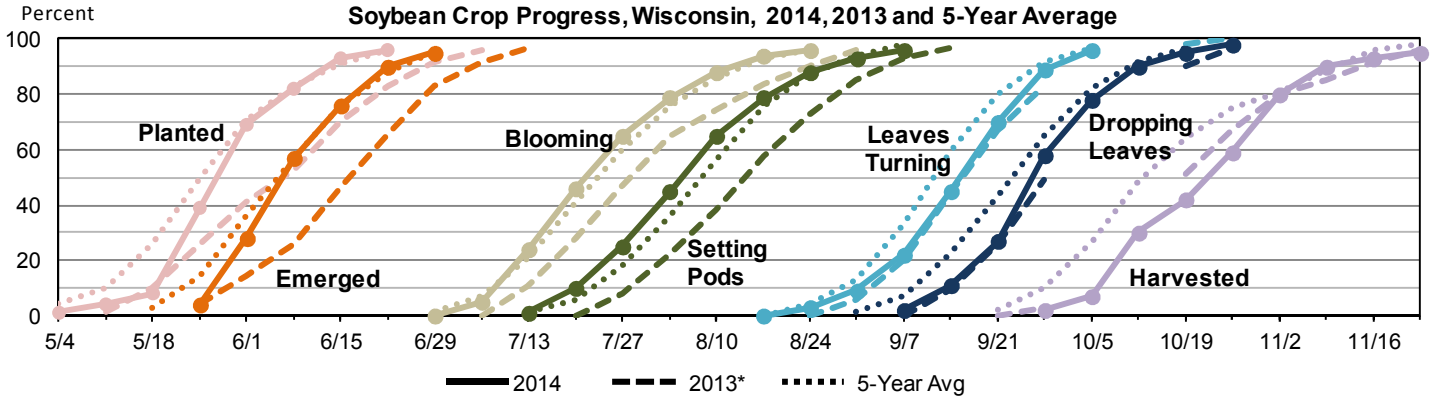
Potato planting started up with 2 percent planted on April 27, after delays from rain and snow. The percentage of potatoes in good to excellent condition averaged in the upper 80s and low 90s throughout early summer before declining into the 70s during July's dry weather. Harvest began in mid-August and proceeded more quickly than other crops, reaching 95 percent on October 12. However, the intense rains of early fall reportedly caused some potatoes to be too wet for storage. In mid-November, a Portage County reporter noted bins spoiling due to excessive moisture in the tubers.

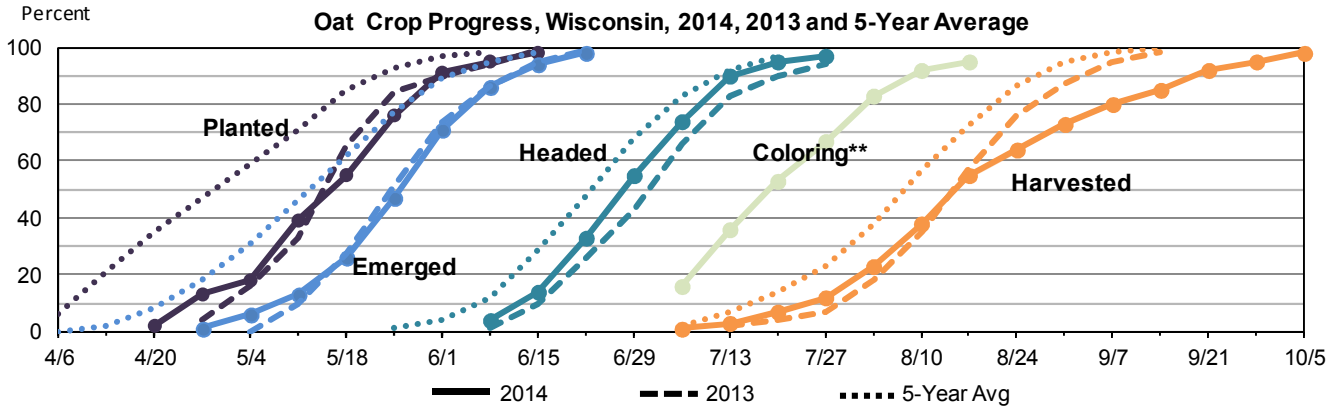
Though this winter was brutally cold, it also featured unusually early, persistent, and extensive snow cover. On May 11, winter freeze damage to **alfalfa** was rated 0 percent severe, 2 percent moderate and 16 percent light. There was no damage to the remaining 82 percent of hay stands, well above the 34 percent of hay stands undamaged in 2013. Cold, wet weather in April and early May made hay stands slow to green up. Abundant moisture meant a lush first crop, but soggy fields and frequent rains delayed cutting past the optimal window of maturity and prevented drying. The midsummer dry spell provided good drying conditions for the late second and early third cuttings. But excessive moisture in September slowed progress, especially for late third cutting harvest in the North-Central District. The fourth cutting caught up to average in October while other fieldwork was delayed. Hay supplies were 4 percent short, 81 percent adequate and 15 percent surplus on November 2, up from 26 percent short in 2013.

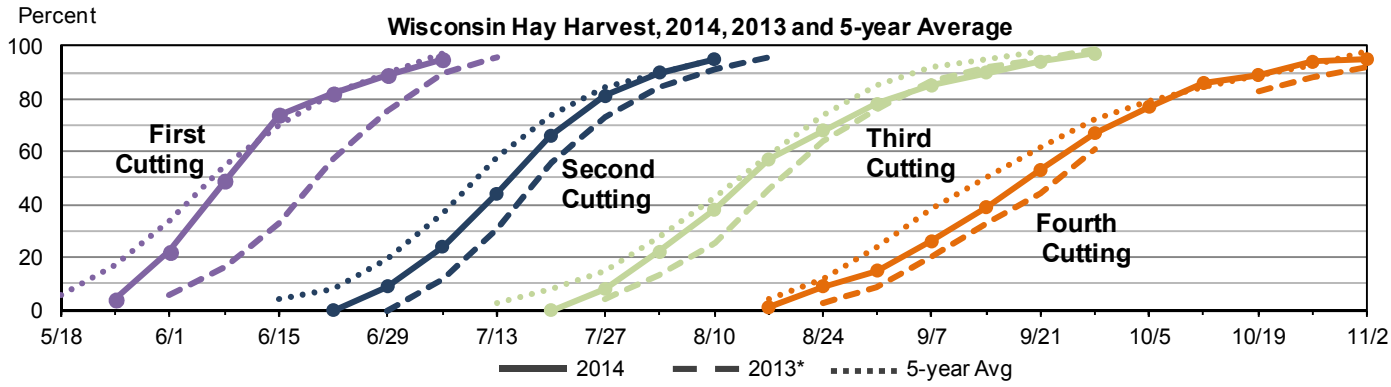
Pastures were unusually slow to recover from this long and snowy winter. However, abundant moisture and warm temperatures during May and June saw steady improvement. Condition peaked for the season with 92 percent of pastures in good to excellent condition on July 13. Dry, cool weather then caused pasture condition to decline, with only 46 percent in good to excellent condition on August 17. Pastureland recovered during this autumn's rains, but below normal temperatures and frosts kept condition lower than in the early summer. Pasture condition averaged 69 percent good to excellent for May through October, compared to 45 percent last year.











*Due to a lapse in federal funding in October 2013, the Crop Progress reports for the weeks ending October 6, 2013 and October 13, 2013 were cancelled. Therefore, previous year estimates for the corresponding weeks will not be available. Five-year average estimates will reflect the years 2009-2013 using published estimates for 2009-2012 and imputed estimates for 2013.

** Oats coloring data was not collected previous to 2014.

COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

District	Average Temperature						Total Precipitation					
	June - September						April - September					
	Normal*	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Normal*	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Degrees Fahrenheit						Inches					
NW	63.6	64.7	64.4	65.0	64.0	63.3	22.16	29.80	21.91	20.80	22.23	30.32
NC	62.7	63.2	63.5	64.0	63.0	61.9	21.82	32.26	21.98	19.10	25.44	27.92
NE	63.1	64.3	64.0	64.6	63.3	62.4	20.32	27.09	20.56	17.54	21.29	23.31
WC	66.2	67.8	67.1	68.2	67.1	66.3	23.96	34.18	22.39	18.86	23.55	30.55
C	65.7	67.3	66.5	68.0	66.4	65.6	22.63	32.84	22.34	16.96	21.16	25.88
EC	65.5	66.9	66.2	67.6	65.5	64.7	20.63	27.57	22.06	17.92	20.13	25.65
SW	67.3	68.9	68.3	69.3	67.9	67.0	24.83	36.37	21.80	15.26	28.66	25.36
SC	67.4	69.2	68.2	69.7	67.6	66.7	23.48	31.96	19.87	14.03	27.69	25.69
SE	67.3	68.8	67.9	69.6	66.9	66.0	22.29	28.46	21.88	14.52	25.47	23.56
STATE	64.9	66.2	65.8	66.7	65.3	64.5	22.43	31.36	21.71	17.86	23.83	27.13

*Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1981-2010. Source: State Climatologist

MONTHLY TEMPERATURES: 2014 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL*

District	April		May		June		July		August		September	
	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal
	Degrees Fahrenheit											
NW	36.6	42.4	53.7	54.1	64.3	63.2	65.9	68.0	65.9	65.9	57.0	57.1
NC	36.1	41.6	53.4	53.4	64.3	62.5	63.6	66.8	64.1	64.9	55.7	56.4
NE	37.2	42.0	53.4	53.4	64.4	62.9	64.1	67.2	64.5	65.4	56.6	57.0
WC	41.3	45.7	56.6	56.8	68.3	66.2	67.6	70.6	69.4	68.3	59.7	59.7
C	41.6	45.2	56.5	56.3	68.4	65.7	66.4	69.9	68.4	67.8	59.2	59.4
EC	40.8	44.1	55.0	54.8	65.7	64.8	66.2	69.4	67.4	67.8	59.3	59.8
SW	44.3	46.9	58.0	57.7	69.6	67.3	67.4	71.4	70.2	69.3	60.8	61.1
SC	44.3	46.8	58.1	57.7	69.2	67.4	67.4	71.5	69.8	69.4	60.5	61.3
SE	43.9	46.1	56.9	56.6	67.0	66.6	67.0	71.2	69.3	69.6	60.6	61.7
STATE	39.7	44.0	55.3	55.3	66.4	64.7	65.9	69.1	67.2	67.1	58.3	58.7

*Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1981-2010. Source: State Climatologist

MONTHLY RAINFALL: 2014 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL*

District	April		May		June		July		August		September	
	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal	2014	Normal
	Inches											
NW	4.92	2.65	5.20	3.36	6.67	4.09	2.75	4.08	5.81	4.01	4.97	3.97
NC	4.31	2.62	4.16	3.39	5.74	4.04	3.07	3.95	5.25	3.81	5.39	4.01
NE	3.64	2.57	2.85	3.23	4.25	3.77	1.76	3.68	5.13	3.46	5.68	3.61
WC	6.01	3.13	4.08	3.78	8.78	4.44	2.79	4.25	5.59	4.49	3.30	3.87
C	5.85	3.00	3.16	3.60	6.08	4.35	1.94	4.04	6.33	4.03	2.52	3.61
EC	5.22	2.86	3.47	3.26	6.84	3.87	2.01	3.67	4.96	3.59	3.15	3.38
SW	6.44	3.56	2.46	4.02	8.00	4.83	2.24	4.44	4.00	4.52	2.22	3.46
SC	5.15	3.37	3.31	3.71	8.07	4.63	2.61	4.09	4.39	4.18	2.16	3.50
SE	3.99	3.42	4.19	3.61	6.79	4.04	2.93	3.78	3.89	4.02	1.77	3.42
STATE	5.04	2.93	3.80	3.53	6.71	4.21	2.51	4.02	5.20	4.01	3.87	3.73

*Normal is defined as the 30-year average for the years 1981-2010. Source: State Climatologist

USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field office
P.O. Box 8934
Madison, WI 53708-8934
(608)224-4848

http://www.nass.usda.gov/wi/

Greg Bussler, State Statistician
Adrien Joyner, Editor

This report has been made possible through the cooperative efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, the Wisconsin State Climatology Office, and the National Weather Service.